All India Sarpanch Conference

*316. SHRI SHARAD YADAV: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the number of panchayat people being invited in the All India Sarpanch Conference;

(b) the arrangement being made for their travel and stay in Delhi and expenses thereon; and

(c) whether it is necessary to make such a huge 'function' for Gram Panchayats, when it is a State subject?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Government have taken no decision on holding an "All India Sarpanch Conference".

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Agreement with Gulf countries

*317. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided to sign agreements with Gulf countries in order to protect Indian workers there; and

(b) the salient features of the agreements and by when these are expected to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) To facilitate the mobilization and requirement of manpower in the Gulf countries and to ensure the protection and welfare of overseas Indian workers the Government of India has signed bilateral Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Government of Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and an Additional Protocol to the Agreement between the State of Qatar and the Republic of India on the Regulation of the Employment of Indian Manpower signed in 1985.

The salient features of the MoUs signed with the UAE in December, 2006 are the following:

(i) Facilitation of manpower recruitment and mutual sharing of information and experience;

(ii) Recruitment to be in conformity with the laws of both countries;

(iii) All categories of workers to have the protection of the UAE labour law and regulation;

(iv) Terms and conditions of employment contract to be in conformity with the work permit that the employer has obtained from the UAE Government.

(v) All contracts to be authenticated by the UAE Labour Ministry;

(vi) The employer would have no authority to change the contract conditions;

(vii) A Joint Committee consisting of three members each from both countries to be responsible for the implementation of the MoU.

The salient features of the MoU signed with the State of Kuwait in April, 2007 are the following: